

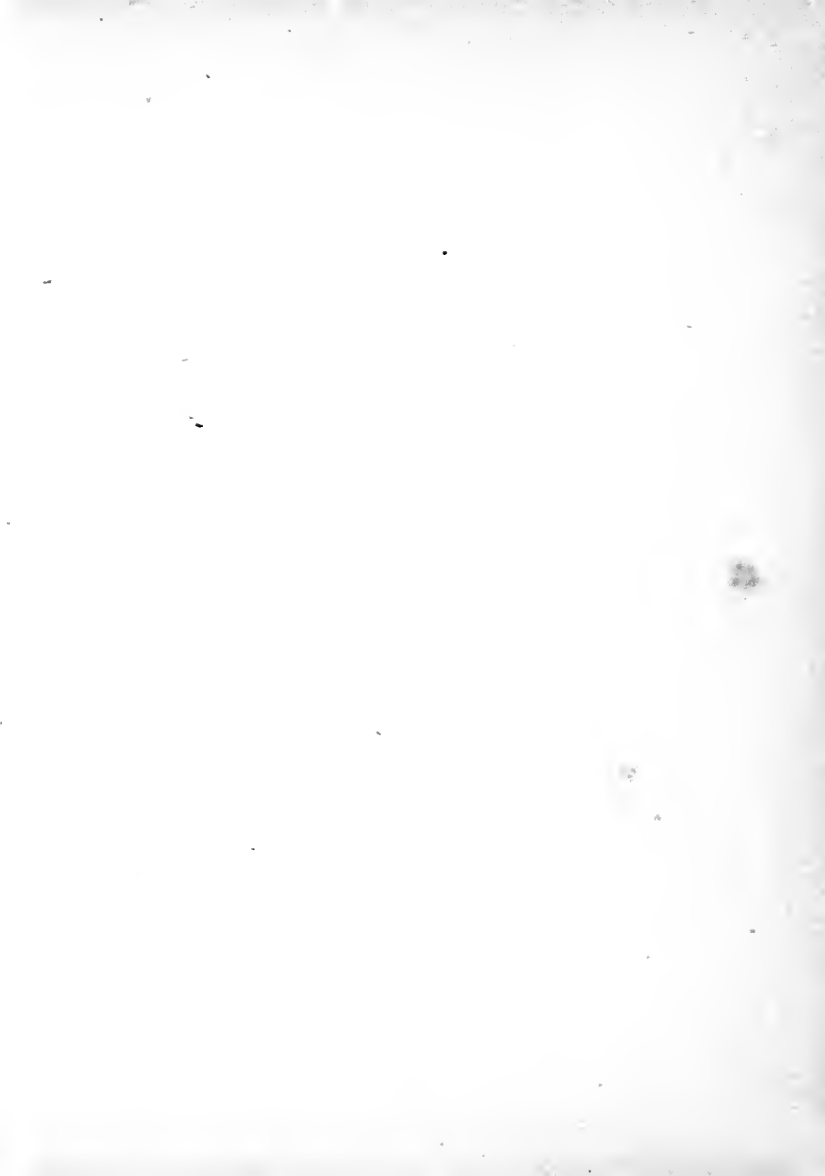
JOAN OF ARC





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JOAN OF ARC.

BY

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JOAN OF ARC.

O, WONDROUS maid ! Let him beware
Who calls thee witch, and e'en declare
Himself thy judge on bended knees
Before that throne no mortal sees.

Proud France, whose annals glory bore,
By factions torn, was France no more.
Her sunny, vine-clad, fruitful lands
Had fallen into English hands ;
Her subjects stood, from hour to hour,
In mortal fear of England's power ;
Her feeble king was king in name ;
Her fearless nobles lived in shame ;
Her wretched peasants, doomed to feel
The base, aristocratic heel,
Down-trodden, plunged, they knew not where,
Into the depths of deep despair.
And here, as Hell's tormenting darts
Transfixed their fainting, bleeding hearts,
They cried with each distressing breath
For mercy from the god of Death.

Their earnest pray'rs, their bitter cries,
Unlocked the portals of the skies,
And from Jehovah's throne above
Descended liberty and love ;
For in the greatness of His power
He blessed them at this dreadful hour.
He chose, not thunder-bolt and hail,
To make the tyrants cow'r and quail ;
But, like His dear and only Son,
He chose the simplest, weakest one, —
A little child — a feeble spark —
Immortal flame — Joan of Arc.
Such were the miseries and woes
That darkened France, when there arose,
To cause a ray of light divine
Through the appalling gloom to shine,
The peasant of Lorraine, whose lance
Preserved her king and country — France.
Her childish life, her sweetest hours,
Were spent among the birds and flowers.
By these instructors she was taught,
And from them views of Heaven caught.
Her mother knew not how to read,
But knew far more : knew how to plead
With Him above who sits alone
And governs Empires from His throne.
So, with a mother's fervent zeal,
The little one was taught to kneel.

What better training could there be
To mould and shape her destiny
Than mother's fond, devoted care
And simple, solemn, earnest prayer?
Now as she reached her maiden state,
Admiring youth at ev'ry gate
Stood watching with those dreamy eyes,
Which lovers use to win their prize,
For her bewitching, lovely face
Which had no equal in its grace.
But no ; her nature never yields
To blandishments which Cupid wields.
Her ardent love, that love's desire
Inspired by God's eternal fire,
Burned for her mother, country, king,
For happiness that peace would bring.
While others played without a care,
Her soul was pouring out in prayer.
Her new delights could now be found
In nature's grandeur, deep, profound.
She loved the mountain, hill, and vale,
The sunshine, shadow, breeze, and gale.
She loved the brook, the lake, the sea ;
She loved the birds so light and free ;
She loved the forest, trees, and rocks ;
She loved the happy, grazing flocks ;
She loved the stars, the moon, the sun ;
She loved the flowers ev'ry one.

Her daily custom was to go
And sit beneath the trees and sew.
This spot she sought with great delight,
Because it brought within her sight
The distant mountain on whose crest
The heavy clouds, retiring, rest ;
The little church where daily pray'rs
Release her from her sinful cares ;
The clear, blue sky which seemed to tell
Where spirits found a place to dwell, —
This trio bound her to the spot
As if it were her happy lot
To meet the angels here alone
And learn of things unseen, unknown.
One day, at noon, while waiting there
To meet her playmates of the air ;
While gazing into azure skies
A voice cried out : "Joan, arise !
Go to thy king ! His crown restore !
And make him king of France once more !"
She, trembling, on her knees, replied :
"Forgive me ! I am young, untried.
The bloody fight, the dying groans,
The sobs, the tears, the gasping moans,
The awful scenery of death
That chills the blood, arrests the breath, —
From these my timid soul would fly
And cry in anguish : 'How can I?'"

But soon there came a reprimand :
"Go ! child ! Fear not ! 'Tis my command !
Proceed at once your king to save
And France to rescue from her grave !
Fear not ! For all the saintly host
Will guard thee to the uttermost !"
Now when this summons died away
And left the maiden to obey,
The strong emotions of her mind,
As if in agony confined,
Turned pale her face and made each nerve
A trembling vassal fear to serve.
But still the voice more strong and clear
Behind her back was drawing near.
"It comes !" she cried ; "yes ; nearer ! Oh !
What shall I do ? Where shall I go ?"
She looked around. There stood the saint
With proffered sword, without complaint.
"Fear not !" he said ; "the saintly host
Will guard thee to the uttermost."
Upon her trembling knees she fell
Before this mystic sentinel.
Then as she knelt and upward gazed
And eyes suffused with tears were raised
To Heaven, with one despairing cry,
She said : "O, Father ! Let me die !"
But no ; her mission was not done ;
Nor were her splendid laurels won.

Transcendent eulogies unsaid
Remained for her, the martyred dead.
Then she arose confused, distressed,
And sought, but sought in vain, for rest.
Tormented by an inward fear
Of sinful disobedience here,
She prayed that, in this awful hour,
She might receive some guiding power :
“ My God ! what shall I do ! I pray,
Shall I the strange command obey ?
Direct me ! O, Omniscient One !
It is my will that thine be done.”
At length, like some frail, tiny boat
On ocean's waters set afloat,
Or as a ship without a sail
Before a stormy, wintry gale
Storm-tossed and wrenched by mountain wave,
Unharbored, helmless, yet still brave,
Seeks some unruffled, peaceful tide
Where sweet relief and joy abide, —
So she sought rest from her alarms
And found it in her mother's arms.
But even mother's fond embrace
With tender love and smiling face,
Although they were so long delayed
And sweetly, too, they only made,
Her anxious, longing, pray'rful soul
Yearn for its aim beyond control.

What solace can there be for one
When conscience finds his work not done !
Resolved at last to meet her fate,
She told her father, friends, and mate,
And soon report had spread it far,
That Joan was to lead in war.
Some called her crazy ; others, mad ;
Some dared to praise her and be glad ;
Some called her witch, and so desired
That she be punished, not admired.
All criticized that wondrous plan
Which made her sorceress, or man.
Her aged father, much displeased,
Declared his daughter's mind diseased ;
That vain delusions had control
Of body, mind, of heart and soul ;
And lifting up his feeble voice
He said : " It is my solemn choice
That she should die this very hour,
Than serve that fatal, evil pow'r.
I know I'm old, and childish too,
I know that life is well nigh through,
I know that death's dark waters flow
Close by my door ; ah ! yes, I know
That soon my wearied feet shall tread
The smoother pathways of the dead.
Earth's brightest hope is my dear child,
My precious girl, so sweet, so mild ;

The solace of my bending years,
The light that drives away the tears.
And should I see her now depart
To fight, O, God ! 'twould break my heart !
No, no ; no, no ; this must not be !
She is too dear, too dear to me !
But should she heed me not, I swear
This base injustice I'll not bear, —
I vow to break Divine commands
And take her life with my own hands !”
But father's threats and mother's tears
Could not subdue religious fears ;
For Heaven's voice she must obey
Regardless of what others say.
At length she found to take her part
An uncle in whose tender heart
Sweet consolation ever lives
To ease the pain which sorrow gives.
He took her to his home as nurse
To shield her from her father's curse.
Renewed endeavors now she made
To get the royal captain's aid.
She urged her uncle quick to fly
To Vaucouleurs, and there to try
The captain's favor to obtain,
Before she sought the king's domain.
Her uncle on his mission went
And sought the captain's full consent.

The captain smiled and said : "Take care ;
The girl is mad ; tell her — beware !
Chastise her well and send her back
To mother's arms before the rack,
The scaffold, stake, or prison bars
Subdue her wild desire for wars."
Disheartened, home her uncle turned
And bore the news, which Joan spurned.
Resolved that cowardly retreat
Should not her purposes defeat ;
She cried : "'Tis Heaven's high decree
That you should now return with me,
And we the captain will implore
To give a hearing, if no more."
Her uncle on her then bestowed
The kind protection which he owed.
Clad in an humble peasant dress,
Her motto : "Peace and Righteousness,"
They then began their tedious tramp
To Vaucouleurs, the captain's camp.
Now when they reached their journey's end,
Though warmly welcomed by a friend
That chance and time they might not waste,
They sought the captain's camp in haste.
Her earnest prayer, her firm request,
Her strong desire, her high behest,
Her solemn vow, her plea sincere,
All fell upon the captain's ear.

At length, in accents much subdued,
Like one with sympathy imbued,
"Speak on, my child," he said, "but know
'T is pity, and not fear I show."
A silent pause, a sweet prelude
To her petition now ensued,
And then like one excelling man
With firmer voice she thus began :
"Sir ! in the name of God, whose throne
O'er empires, nations, worlds unknown,
Extends and ever shall remain
Till time's eternal, endless chain
Revolves no more, — to you I bring
This message from Creation's King :
Go to your king and him command
To give no battle, till I stand
Equipped with God's eternal might
To put his enemy to flight.
He shall be king, and France shall see
The glory of his victory.
Proceed, I say, for God on High
With awful wrath commands, not I.
Tell him my duty will be done
When he is crowned and vict'ry won."
Thus spoke the maid. This great command
The captain could not understand,
Her manner was of strange import,
Incomprehensible. The Court

Of High, Eternal Heaven could be
No more exact in its decree.
He bade the maiden to withdraw
That he might seek advice at law ;
A strange emotion filled his mind
As if some phantom close behind
Pursued him with its noiseless tread,
And chiding, haunting, never fled.
Distressed, he knew not what to say,
So to the clergy made his way ;
This holy council, which professed
Supernal wisdom, thus addressed
The captain : " Sir, if you admit
That God exists and rules, submit
To His Divine command, although
Why He so acts you may not know.
Did he not save the world through man ?
Then question not His mode or plan.
If He should choose to rescue France
It matters not who bears the lance."
This wise reply the captain heard,
But thought, of course, it was absurd.
The curate also was employed
In priestly garments unalloyed.
He viewed the case and could but find
That God or Satan ruled her mind
And calling her, said in this wise :
" Young maid, the captain you surprise.

If God has called thee, heed the voice ;
If Satan, woe be to your choice ! ”
A low obeisance then she made
And smiled, no longer now afraid.
“ ’Tis God ! ’tis God ! ” she cried aloud.
“ France finds a king, her foe a shroud ! ”
Back to the captain then she went
And said : “ Good sir, before mid-Lent
I see the king and tell him all,
Though on my knees to him I crawl.
What God commands, dare not defy !
Take me to Chinon,—ask not why ! ”
Two knights had listened to the maid
And, deeply moved, arose and said :
“ With God’s assistance we do swear
To take you to the royal chair.”
The captain then gave his consent
Although afraid he might repent.
The town of Vaucouleurs obtained
A horse for Joan, finely trained ;
Also a military dress,—
Slight tokens of her worthiness.
The captain gave her, too, a sword
And sent her off with friendly word.
And thus equipped they took their way
To Chinon without long delay.
Meanwhile the king and courtiers armed,
’Gainst Joan’s actions were alarmed.

Some counsellors with gestures wild
Advised the king to spurn the child,
As though despatched by Satan's will
To victimize, and hades fill.
And others urged at great expense
Of ev'rything but common sense
That all such sacreligious things
Need oracle or priests, not kings.
The ladies of the court were proud
To think that France might be allowed
To choose a savior, through God's plan,
From womankind instead of man ;
And so, elated, they believed
That Joan ought to be received.
Prevailed upon at last by fear,
The king replied : " Let her appear !
But I will put her to a test
To see if she be cursed or blest.
I will this day at court presume
The dress of courtiers to assume
And mingle with that common throng
To which a king does not belong.
Then let the maid select her king
From out this complex gathering.
If she be God-inspired I know
That through disguise my blood will show :
But if inspired by Satan, then
She 'll know me not from other men."

This plan devised, the king retired
To court in courtier's dress attired.
The courtiers, king, and noblemen
Were there in full attendance, when
Joan appeared with timid blush
That caused an unexpected hush.
By pomp, and court, and dress, confused
She stood at first, as though accused
Of some foul crime which called her there,
To guilty, or not guilty, swear.
But lest her aim they might defeat
And call her an impostor, cheat,
Her fleeting courage she recalled,
And stood undaunted, unappalled.
Among the throng with timid glance
She sought her king — the king of France.
No king's apparel could she see
In all that august company.
But all at once, though dense the crowd,
She recognized the king and bowed.
And ere she could lift up her head
To call him king, he calmly said :
"I am not king, young maid, 't is he
Who yonder stands ; select not me."
"I speak," she said, "what I believe ;
Thou art the king ; let none deceive."
Then added in a solemn voice :
"Most noble one of Heaven's choice,

The King of Kings, as best it seems,
Declares you shall be crowned at Rheims
And over France shall reign unharmed
In spite of your oppressors armed.
And more : God will not me release
Till you are crowned and France at peace."
These words prophetic, strange, and grand
Stood king and court as by command
In awe of this great Magistrate
Ordained by Heaven's high mandate.
The king then talked with her about
A secret which put him in doubt,
As to his proper, lawful right
To take the King's crown if he might.
"Am I, or am I not, the heir
To hold by right the royal chair?
Was Charles the Sixth my lawful Sire,
Or was I born of Hell's desire?
Pray tell me this, dispel my gloom
And save me from eternal doom."
The maid replied : "Most worthy one,
I tell thee that thou art the son
Of Charles the Sixth, and God on high
Reveals it to me from the sky.
Most gracious king, if thou wilt give
Me soldiers thou shalt surely live
To see our country safe, unharmed,
Thyself its King, thy foe disarmed."

Thus was the maid, severely tried
Found equal to the test applied.
Soon Rumor, like a spark of fire
To tinder set, or like a crier
Whose business 't is, with hurried breath,
To spread the news of life and death,
Ran through the town, o'er field and hill,
Till ev'ry heart was made to thrill.
Her consultation with the chief,
The court's respect for her belief,
The knights' entreaties strong but kind,
The people's clamor, — all combined,
Made Joan's mission almost seem
Like some prophetic, awful dream
Which none but gods could understand ;
But which was her Divine command.
She thus became a brilliant star
Which shone through blackened clouds of war.
Excitement now became so strong
That people round the maid would throng
And make the very air to ring
With shouts : " God bless the Maid and king ! "
Some gave her steeds of war superb
And taught her how their might to curb ;
Some gave her swords which none excel,
And taught her how to use them well.
Sustained by God, equipped by man,
She stood prepared to lead the van.

But, though she had the means and will
For war, one thing was needed still.
This was the king's consent to fight,
For France, for King, for God, for Right.
The king, with anxious eyes upraised,
Walked back and forth as if half-crazed.
Sweet sleep did not a visit pay,
So worried was he night and day.
His constant thought, his daily prayer,
Were for release from this great care.
Till finally with firm resolve
This haunting mystery to solve,
He told the maid: "At once prepare
To meet the Doctors and to swear
That you were sent with sword and lance
To crown me king, to rescue France.
You will be questioned close, severe,—
And if you fail you shall appear
Before a bar of justice where
Its condemnation you shall bear."
At this decision Joan drew
A sigh of sadness, for she knew
What trials she must undergo
To learn what Doctors think they know.
But nerved to meet, at once, her fate,
She set out for the learned gate.
In presence of the Doctors, she
First bowed with simple modesty.

The whitened locks, the wrinkled brows,
The measured steps, the stately bows,
The sunken eyes, the beards of snow,
The aged shoulders stooping low,
The awful mystery profound,
Where knowledge, wisdom, skill abound,
The solemn, tomb-like, dreadful air,
Which drives one almost to despair,
All met the trembling maiden's eye, —
And made her shrink with fear ; yes, cry.
But all this vapory display
Which gives men titles, fades away,
When once the light of truth Divine
Is made upon their works to shine :
As when men meet beyond death's veil,
True worth, not titles, will prevail.
And thus in cold, unfeeling tone,
The Doctors quizzed her, one by one :
"Joan," said one, "if God decreed
That France be saved, why does he need
A victory on battlefield
By soldiers armed with sword and shield?
If Sun, and Moon, and Stars, and Earth,
Just from command received their birth,
Why does Jehovah aid implore
From you, a child, and nothing more ?"
"Most honored sir, do I mistake ?
Dispute makes wars, wars battles make ;

Battles need soldiers, soldiers fight,
The fight gives vict'ry to the right.
Who is right, God alone decides,
Hence victory with God abides."
Another said : " Precocious child,
Let not sanctity be defiled ;
If you can give no other sign
Of revelation called Divine,
The king indeed cannot entrust
You with his army. This you must
Remember, trifle not with things
Concerning nations, crowns, or kings."
" Most honored and respected one,
Through whom God's business here is done,
'T is not to you that I am sent
To show some sign of God's intent ;
Take me, I pray, with soldiers few,
To Orleans, and you never knew
A grander sign than I will show,
Of God's omnipotence below."
At last, a third prophetic sage
Stepped forth, and questioned her with rage :
" Young, foolish child," he said, with looks
Of sternness, " we consult our books,
And they most rigidly denounce
Such wild delusions, and pronounce
Tormenting death to one who dares
To deal with such Satanic snares.

Beware ! lest this, your mighty strife,
Should terminate your childish life."

The maid replied with earnest voice :

" The Book of Books is my sweet choice.

You read the works of man's device :

Consult the Book of Paradise.

What I can do myself is small —

What I can do through God, is all."

The doctors shook their heads, as though

Just what to say they did not know.

Confused, confounded, they withdrew

To find out what they really knew

Concerning God's great plans and acts

Which they were thought to know as facts.

They felt that they were humble, meek,

That they were men, and, like men, weak.

All points considered, they returned

Much wiser, if not better learned.

They answered, with a gracious nod :

" All things are possible with God.

Great acts through mortals He performs,

He calms the winds, He quells the storms,

He rears the dead, the sick He heals,

He conquers nations, yet conceals

All but the instruments employed :

Why, then, should man be so annoyed?

The power of God is better known,

When through great weakness it is shown.

The child may be an instrument
 Of His all-wise, supreme intent."
 Such verdict, therefore, was returned
 By this wise council now adjourned.
 Now, when these words the king had heard,
 No more he thought her plan absurd.
 Convinced, the maiden he recalled,
 And o'er an army her installed.
 Thus did she see her labors crowned
 With triumph, evermore renowned.
 In token of her purity,
 In view of her security,
 An armor strong, of silver white,
 With glist'ning ornaments made bright,
 A standard indicating power,
 'Round which was the heraldic flower,
 The Fleur-de-lis of France, entwined
 In simple beauty rare to find ;
 A rusty sword, which she foretold
 Was hidden in a chapel old
 Near Chinon, and with crosses five,
 Was marked by some one, when alive, —
 As gifts on Joan were conferred,
 Except the sword which she preferred.
 And thus equipped, she took her place
 As general, prepared to face
 Her mortal foe, whose only aim
 Was France to conquer, France to claim.

Now, as these soldiers stood in line,
By Joan led, they seemed divine, —
As if an angel had been sent
From Heaven with a regiment.
And thus made ready to set out
For Orleans, there arose a shout
From crowds, whose wild, exultant cry
Resounded to the very sky :
“ Long live the maid who goes to bring
Salvation to our land and king ! ”
All officers, without reserve,
The king commanded to observe
Complete obedience to her,
To whom all things they must refer.
Subservient to God's High Throne,
She first began to raise the tone
Of army morals, which she found
Were anything but strong and sound.
Cards, dice, all instruments of games,
In camp and town, were soon in flames.
And men of God were called to preach,
Exhort, admonish, and to teach.
Religion, patriotism, wars —
Those things which indolence abhors,
Now filled the army with a zeal,
Which hitherto it did not feel.
Enthusiasm's wild delight
Put cowardice and fear to flight.

Such preparation then was given
To her the Delegate from Heaven.
Thus ready, with majestic air,
She bade her leaders to prepare
Their march along the northern side
Of river Loire, till they abide
Near Orleans, where she bade them halt,
And wait the orders for assault.
On Loire's selected bank there grew
Dense forests, which dark shadows threw
O'er England's forces stationed there
In secret service, to ensnare
The French, whose daring army might,
Perchance, pass through by day or night.
This secret force, in numbers large,
Was so arranged as to discharge
A most terrific, deadly shower
Of arms, at danger's anxious hour.
This filled the leaders with a dread,
To lead as ordered, and, instead,
They planned the maiden to deceive,
That their own fears they might relieve.
And so the southern bank they chose,
But did not this to her disclose.
Three days they marched with fierce desires,
When Joan saw the lofty spires
Of Orleans indistinctly rise
Against the distant clouded skies ;

But indignation, righteous, just,
O'erwhelmed her when she found she must
The river ford before she could
Appear at Orleans, if she would.
Deceptive journey, well contrived,
Thus made, thus failed ; for she arrived,
In spite of falsehood and deceit,
At Orleans with her force complete.
Majestic Orleans, proud to stand
Beneath the banner of her land,
And wave the Fleur-de-lis of France
Before great England's threatened lance,
And in her grander strains to sing
The praises of her Nation's king, —
Now, weakened, stood in doubt and fear,
Expecting hourly to appear
Besieging England's mighty men,
To take by storm the city, when,
Behold ! the sounds of tramping feet
The startled ears of Orleans greet ;
The guards cry out in accents wild :
" An army comes, led by a child ! "
The bells are rung ; the cannons roar ;
The flags are raised ; all fear is o'er.
" God bless the maid ! " the masses cry.
" God grant her wisdom from on High !
For, at this unexpected hour,
His angel comes with mighty power."

The long, exciting, tedious tramp
The troops fatigued, and they encamp
Outside the city limits, where
The night's refreshment they prepare.
The evening shadows softly creep
O'er tired nature, and sweet sleep
The heavy, drooping eyelids close,
And hush the lips in calm repose.
The next morn, with the rising sun,
Was heard the pealing rising gun.
And soon the camp was full of life,
Preparing for the deadly strife.
Joan, with ardor most intense,
Gave orders for the grand defence.
Details of men were sent to guard
The country, where the foe pressed hard.
She, with two hundred lances bright,
That gleamed beneath the morning light,
Advanced and entered Orleans gate,
The English movements to await.
And now, that she might lose no time,
In language fearless, bold, sublime,
A letter was despatched with speed
From Orleans for the king to read.
"Great England's King," she said ; "and you,
The Duke of Bedford, whom a few
Will dare proclaim, with great array
Of foul political display,

And false pretensions showy, bold,
The Regency of France to hold ;
You Suffolk of immortal fame ;
John Talbot, too, an honored name ;
You Thomas Scales, who claim with pride,
Lieutenanthship, and more beside ;
You archers straight and men-at-arms,
Who fill Orleans with great alarms, —
To all, I say, in mercy given,
Surrender to the King of Heaven !
Haste ! in the name of God, to fly
To your own country ere you die !
I am supported by the rod
Of that eternal, just, wise God,
Whose vengeance you shall surely know,
Unless the flag of truce you show !
For with the help of Him, I swear
To war upon you everywhere !
Believe me, in this fearful hour,
My King shall give me greater power
Than you can bring with all the host
Of valiant men of which you boast.”
Such was the challenge which she sent
From Orleans for acknowledgment.
Derision, laughter, jests, and jeers,
Low mockery, disgusting sneers,
Repulsive, loathsome, filthy, mean,
Disdainful language, most obscene,

In answer to her challenge came
And justly made her blush with shame.
"War, most destructive," she replies,
"Shall bury France, or France franchise.
Come on ! and if we first retreat,
We will ask mercy at your feet.
But if the God of Hosts shall bring
Us off triumphant, we will sing
Loûd hallelujahs to His name,
And echo will repeat the same."
He who awaits Jehovah's word
Knows not what moment shall be heard
His summons ; but unrest, alarm,
Ofttimes forerun, forewarn, forearm.
One day, amid her sweet repose,
When sleep her eyelids tried to close,
That she might feel the sweet embrace
Of dreamland's calmness, where no trace
Of wearied, worn, unrestful feet
Their footsteps left, her eyes to meet,
And that brief respite might relax
The mental strain which would o'ertax
Her mental engine and impair
The driving force secluded there,
She sprang with suddenness of flight
Upon her feet, and with delight
And fear commingled shouted : "Haste !
Arm me ! Arm me ! Will you make waste

Of time? Daulon? For now I hear
My summons, loud and strong and clear;
To arms! To arms! To war! To fight!
Before the day gives place to night!
Advance at once! and fear forget
Ere France's foundations are upset!"

Whilst Daulon was attiring her
For war, a great uproar and stir
Was heard throughout both street and lane
As if the people were insane:—
"The guards are murdered at the gates!"
They cried, "God save us from the Fates!"
This touched the maiden to the heart:
"O God!" she said, "let me depart!
The blood of France is flowing free;
A sight I can not, will not see.
My sword! My lance! My horse! My horse!
Let me not stay to taste remorse!"

She mounted in great haste her steed,
Her standard seized, and at full speed
She rode until the gates she reached
Where murdered guards in death lay bleached.
At this sad sight her face partook
The pale, unsightly, ghastly look
On each repulsive corpse portrayed
Till she seemed life in death arrayed.
But quick her full returning blood
Brought to her mind a raging flood

Of indignation which abstained
Not from expression though constrained.
The French had tried to overthrow
The Bastile of St. Loup : But, lo,
She found that they were driv'n back
By Talbot, in their first attack,
That they had sought irresolute
Orleans with Talbot in pursuit,
That guards who dared to interfere
Were murdered outright with the spear,
That consternation, grief, and fright
Had valor put to rapid flight.
And thus their drooping courage fraught
With weakness utterly unsought,
In words of love and righteousness
She rallied with great earnestness :
“ Weak sons of France ! Apostates, all !
In flight most great, in valor small —
Your country's cry is for defense,
Your mother's anguish most intense,
In prayer to God each hour ascends
And to Him all your acts commends.
Your wives in bitter tears at home
Watch faithfully for peace to come
That they may hear once more the voice
Of him their dearest, sweetest choice.
Your infants at their mother's breast,
In blissful ignorance at rest,

Your aged father's childish tears
Increasing with advancing years ;
Your girls at play around his feet ;
Your sisters at the mercy seat ;
Your fondest hope, your sweetest joy,
Your darling pride, your happy boy ;
O soldiers ! Men ! Will you indeed
Prove traitors in this hour of need ?
May God forbid ! awake ! unite !
And stand up for your country's right ! ”
These earnest words from Joan's heart,
The influence they did impart
Recalled their fleeting bravery,
Their great disdain for slavery,
And caused each honest heart to vow
Allegiance new, unbroken now.
One's love of country, when grown cold,
Rekindled, burns increased tenfold.
Now with her army thus inspired,
And with eternal vengeance fired,
She shouted to her valiant van :
“ Advance to conquer, man for man ! ”
Then onward to their foe they rushed
With fury of a storm unhushed.
They routed Talbot and assailed
The fortress where he had prevailed.
Hot was the contest now pursued
And great the slaughter which ensued.

Defensive and offensive, both
Fell dead, still faithful to their oath.
And when the triumph was complete,
And Joan held the victor's seat,
With garrison in bondage kept,
The tender-hearted maiden wept
To see the wounded and the dead,
With no one there a tear to shed.
What more distressing picture can
Present itself to mortal man
Than when a soldier — foe or friend —
On battlefield meets his sad end !
With no kind word to soothe his mind,
With no sweet act of any kind ;
But left to bleed, to faint, to groan,
To die un comforted, alone.
Upon the river's bank there stood
In Orleans' haughty neighborhood
Four fortresses which had defied
The Maid, the king, and God beside.
Resolved to strike another blow
If signs of peace they failed to show,
She made one more attempt to spare
Such flow of blood and deep despair ;
She scaled a tower's lofty height
And with an arrow's rapid flight
She shot a letter swift and straight
Within the hostile, guarded gate ;

She summoned them their arms to burn
And promised mercy in return.
Their ears were deaf, their minds were set
And they would not surrender yet.
They made the arrow quickly bear
An answer backward through the air.
She blushed on hearing these replies,
Then said : " God knows that these are lies !
Within three days you shall repent
Of this foul message you have sent."
With greatest haste her plans were made
These strongholds quickly to invade.
Scarce had the Oriental hue
Of dewy morn escaped from view ;
Nor had the sun his zenith cleared
A second time when there appeared
Opposing armies, war equipped,
With spears and arrows sharply tipped.
As cloud approaching thunder-cloud,
With awful pace and challenge loud,
Advances boldly, then recedes
To gather all the force it needs,—
So moved these armies, so began
A more decisive battle than
Had yet been fought since first the Maid
Bore arms her king and France to aid.
Now, back and forth, both armies swayed,
And little progress either made ;

So closely balanced were the twain,
That both might hope triumph to gain.
But finally the weaker fled,
Which threw defeat on Joan's head.
She to an island had retired,
From which she saw all that transpired.
And when she saw the French repulsed
And put to flight, she was convulsed
With shame ; and springing to her boat,
Which at her service was afloat,
Into their very midst she bore
That power which had triumphed before.
Her presence, voice, her standard bright,
Her face revealing God and Right,
Electrified her feeble men,
And touched their hearts with pride again.
" Oh men ! " she said ; " why falter now ?
Be faithful to your solemn vow !
Come, follow me ! your steps retrace !
Nor dare your country's flag disgrace ! "
Then back she led her valiant band
And fired the forts with her own hand
Great was the terror and despair,
But greater was the triumph there ;
For smoking ashes, bloody stones,
And broken swords, and skulls, and bones,
And bodies mangled and half-burned,
All trophies which the victor earned,

Remained the double tale to tell
Of triumph and defeat as well.
Triumphant songs the army raised :
“Long live the Maid !” and “God be praised !”
Her leaders thought that they had gained
A full surrender, and refrained
From further action, till they heard
From Joan’s lips, the burning word :
“Beware ! Good men, you may have had
Your counsellors, but they were bad.
Be ready ere to-morrow’s sun
Begins his daily course to run ;
For from his shining, golden car,
He shall behold more bloody war
Than yet the most observing eyes
Have witnessed underneath our skies.
And, in this dreadful, bloody strife,
My blood shall flow ; perhaps my life
On wings invisible shall soar
Beyond this vale forevermore.
To-morrow great Orleans shall see
Her downfall or her victory ;
For on the morrow we advance,
With every valiant, trusty lance,
Against the Bastile des Tournelles,
Which in resistance none excel.
This fort aggressive England calls
Her best defence, in trench and walls,

And, if defeated we retreat,
Orleans shall bow at England's feet,
And France, belovéd France, shall bear
The yoke of England in despair ;
But, if our banner, men, shall wave
In splendid triumph o'er the brave,
Then shall Orleans exultant raise
Te Deums to the God we praise
And France, with banners high unfurled,
Declare her glory to the world.
O, men ! the morrow's eve shall see
Us slaves to England's crown, or free.
Let every man his God implore
This night for help, as ne'er before."
Now, when the lovely goddess Morn
Began creation to adorn,
To put her sable sister night,
Her equal rival quick to flight,
To paint the skies with rosy hues,
To fill the air with balmy dews,
To burst the swelling, fragrant buds,
To scatter sweetness o'er in floods,
To break the slumbers, wake the song
Of forest chorus, still so long,
The simple child, the pious Maid,
To God her Helper sweetly prayed :
" Dear Father, whose all-seeing eye
Creation scans, nor passes by

A sparrow's fall unheeded, O,
What passing goodness thou dost show !
To Thee I lift my feeble strain,
And dearly hope 't is not in vain.
What I have done that is amiss,
Forgive, forget, O Lord ; 't is bliss
Unqualified, supreme, to know
That Thou hast pardoned us below.
Thou art my strength, my life, my all,
Though terrors shake and fears appall.
For guidance I would humbly pray
Through the great crisis of to-day ;
And if this day should be my last,
I thank Thee, Father, for the past,
For my frail life so long preserved,
For all Thy mercies undeserved.
And as my eyelids close in death,
My last expiring, fleeting breath
Shall utter praises to Thy name
And Thy great goodness shall proclaim.
To Thee my soldiers I commend,
And ask that Thou wilt comfort send
To ev'ry wife, and child, and friend
Who waits at home the battle's end.
Deal tenderly with those who weep,
Be merciful to those who sleep
To wake no more till Morn shall break,
And Thy Archangel, flight shall take

To open ev'ry silent grave
To judge, to punish, or to save.
And now once more, as Christ Thy Son
Prayed, let me pray : Most Holy One,
Our Father who in Heaven art,
Thy name be hallowed in each heart.
Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done
In earth and Heaven, both as one.
Our daily bread we ask from Thee
As Christ who died on Calvary.
Forgive our debts as we forgive
Our debtors, Lord, while here we live,
And lead us not, we humbly pray,
Into temptation's flow'ry way.
Deliver us from 'evil Thou
Before whom we submissive bow,
All glory, power, and praise shall then
Forever more be Thine. Amen !"
The maid's petition, Heaven-born,
Great beauty added to the morn,
And Art, however high or great,
Could not its beauty imitate.
While Joan prayed to God and wept,
The mighty fortress guarded slept
Unconscious of the awful gloom
That threatened its eternal doom.
With deep entrenchment, massive wall
The guarded Bastile challenged all,

And safety seemed to find a spot
Where danger could molest her not.
But ditch, nor wall, nor work of man
Could disconcert the maiden's plan.
While England's strongest fortress stood
Unvanquished and unstained with blood.
A few short hours had passed away
And morn had introduced the day.
The maiden could no longer wait,
Her inward fears would not abate :
She roused her army's pride again
In words as follows : " Valiant men !
Behold, I pray, yon fortress wall !
Shall it defy ? or shall it fall ?
Come on ! ye brave ! and do your best
And God above will do the rest !
If we the Bastile capture, oh !
Why should we longer dread the foe ?
Now all at once with shouts and cries
The French rush forward to their prize ;
With one combined, tremendous blow
They struck the fortress of the foe ;
Protected well by wall and trench
And grand artillery ; the French
As fast as they advanced were slain
And lay in heaps — sad prize to gain.
The horrors that were pictured there
Would equal Hell's deep, dark despair :

The moans, the groans, the sobs, the sighs,
The bloodless faces, bloodshot eyes,
The hands for mercy clenched in prayer,
The cries their misery to spare, —
Would thrill the hardest heart with fears,
And dim the sternest eyes with tears.
Some called for mother, some for wife ;
Some prayed for help, and some for life ;
Some cursed this final, fatal morn ;
Some cursed the day that they were born ;
Some murmured, filled with loyal pride,
“ O, God, my country save,” and died ;
Some rolled in agony, then smiled,
Submissive, wordless, reconciled.
Oh ! horrid scene of dreadful birth !
Oh ! pandemonium on earth !
At such great slaughter and distress,
The French became most spiritless.
A panic seized the multitude,
And Fear ran off with Fortitude.
Alone the maiden firm remained
And at their cowardice complained ;
Then fearless she a ladder placed
Against the rampart in great haste,
And, sword in hand, she scaled the wall, —
But hark ! A hiss — a shriek — a fall —
And in the ditch she gasping lay
Her life-blood stealing swift away.

An arrow had been straightly aimed,
Had pierced her neck, — surrender claimed.
The English, thinking her by far
To be the greatest prize in war,
Rushed from the fortress quick as thought
That she in bondage might be brought :
But ere they could their prize obtain
The French with all their might and main,
Returned regardless of their fate
And rescued her inviolate.
She soon recovered from her wound
Undaunted and for triumph bound.
Desirous that no time be lost,
Regardless of what it might cost,
Remounted, she her army led
Back to the fortress and their dead,
“ Behold ! ” she said, “ your comrades slain !
Shall all this slaughter be in vain ?
If valor only held the place
Which fear possesses, you would face
More perils than are here arrayed
Nor be discouraged, nor dismayed.”
The English, who believed her dead,
Supposing that her troops had fled,
Were struck with horror when their eyes
Beheld her form remounted rise
Before them, like some spirit sent
On restless wings of discontent

To finish some great work begun,
But which stern Death had found undone.
With greatest haste the trench was spanned
By bridge which was as quickly manned.
Across this, armed with shield and spear,
With French battalion in the rear,
A knight, whose courage won the prize,
Advanced the fortress to surprise.
The English leader, Gladsdale, shook
With terror, and his flight he took
Behind a second trench to shield
Himself from his new fate revealed.
The French pursued him close behind,
With shouts and threats of every kind,
While all the air and earth around
Were filled with the exultant sound
Of Joan crying as she ran :
"Surrender, Gladsdale, while you can !
Thou hast reviled me, yet I will
Show lenience and pity still."
And, as these words she uttered, lo !
The bridge on which he met his foe
With one tremendous crash went down,
Which threw defeat on England's crown.
Grand exultations, loud huzzas
Re-echoed to the sleeping stars.
The bells of Orleans loudly rang,
The multitudes loud pæans sang,

Their great deliverer had come,
Sweet angel, from a sweeter home.
The maiden modestly believed
The victory by God achieved.
Her mind replete with holy joys,
Unbounded gratitude employs
To Him, her Maker, Helper, Friend,
Who ruled the battle to its end.
While men first glorified her name,
Then God's, declaring both the same ;
She was their glory, she their rod,
She their preserver, she their God.
Thus Orleans by the Maid was saved,
And France her banners proudly waved.
Proud, sinful man his God ignores
Till danger comes, then God implores.
The English leaders now aver
That Joan led, but God led her.
He who sits down to magnify
His own success, nor reasons why,
Becomes an egotist, and then
A god, superior to men,
And soon he dares to seize the reins
From Him who holds them, nor restrains ;
But, just as he begins to rule,
He finds himself a stupid fool ;
His bubbles burst, his castles fall,
He grasps at nothing, gets it all.

Unlike such dangerous displays
Of self-conceit, which never pays,
The maiden, thinking it a crime
In such vain shows to waste her time,
Prepared for victory complete,
By kneeling at the mercy seat,
These were her beautiful displays,
God first, self last, which always pays.
Now marching from Orleans at will,
Which with her praise resounded still,
They marched to strike a with'ring blow
Against the next stronghold, Jergeau.
Scarce had the lovely month of June
Put half her chords in perfect tune,
When battle's shout and cannon's roar
A great attack announced once more.
The angel Death with sable wings
Besmeared with blood exultant sings:
"O mortal men ! why fight and die ?
Who gains the triumph, you or I ?
Do as you will ; while you remain
The more you lose, the more I gain.
What has been done I will undo.
Created beings I pursue,
And as they fight, or dance, or sing,
Or praise, or curse, I snap the string.
Thus millions now I have in store,
Ten million times ten millions more

Will gather round me one by one
Ere my great work on earth is done."
But what is life in time of war?
'T is no more than a shooting-star
Whose flight, unnoticed and unknown
Sweeps through the azure and is gone.
Amid the battle's awful din,
The French resolved Jergeau to win ;
The maiden, by some power impelled,
The rampart mounted, and upheld
Her standard resolute, alone,
When suddenly a ragged stone
Was hurled and in its whizzing flight
It felled her senseless from their sight.
The angel Death with horrid shriek
Descended like a lightning's streak
And clutched the Maid ; but no ; O, no !
God's arm protects ; dread angel, go !
With broken helmet she arose
Up from the ditch where brief repose
Had lulled her senses fast to sleep,
And stationed angels watch to keep.
Her casque of steel and flowing hair,
Which was arranged with maiden's care,
Her precious life so well preserved
That Death, though present, unobserved
Retired without his long-sought game
Into the darkness whence he came.

Thus rescued she resumed her place,
Her duty stamped upon her face.
Her army seemed at once to draw
New inspiration when they saw
Their leader from the foe preserved
To vindicate the flag she served.
Now as a mountain wave recedes,
Then gathers force as it proceeds
Until it reaches rock or shore
Then dashes on with awful roar,
So Joan's army first withdrew,
And then with all their force they threw
Themselves in one united mass
Against the city, and, alas !
The feeble stronghold tried in vain
Its re-enforcements to obtain.
A deadly struggle now took place,
Each moment seemed to fill all space,
With spirits groaning, as their flight
They took beyond our mortal sight.
Just then the Maid rushed to their head,
Her face appearing like the dead.
" Brave men ! " she said : " Do not delay !
Dear France is proud of you to-day ! "
One mighty effort then they made,
The English force became dismayed.
And as they saw the ghastly form
Of Joan riding on the storm

Of fire, and smoke, and shot, and ball,
Jergeau surrendered — once for all.
Another great day's work was done,
Another victory was won.
As through the city now her own
She rode amid the dying groan,
The sob, the gasp, the cry, the prayer,
The pictures of abject despair,
Her eyes were moved to tears to see
Such suffering humanity :
And so dismounting, full of love,
Like some sweet angel from above
The bleeding wounds herself she dressed,
The dying moments sweetly blessed ;
She had a kind word for each one,
Unchristian act she had for none.
Success or failure once begun
A rapid course it seems to run.
Success holds mastery o'er all,
Till suddenly it gets a fall ;
Then Failure takes most rapid strides
And conquers all and all derides.
Success now seems to hold the reins
And laughs while Failure sore complains ;
And every effort seems to yield
New triumphs on the battlefield ;
For city after city threw
Its gates wide open, as she drew

Her valiant army round its walls,
 Then to her aid Jehovah calls.
 As onward now her march she took
 Auxerre and Troyes and Chalons shook
 With fear and opened wide their gates,
 Submissive to the higher fates.
 And Rheims also was glad to raise
 The Fleurs-de-lis of France with praise.
 O, mighty plan so well conceived !
 O, mighty victory achieved !
 Joan, the peasant of Lorraine,
 Had broken England's mighty chain,
 Stern Duty's hardest paths had trod,
 Had saved her king, obeyed her God,
 And had enrolled her peasant name
 On history's bright page of fame.
 It was a lovely summer's day,
 The breaking clouds had passed away
 And had unveiled the gorgeous sun,
 And all Creation had begun
 Its mystic beauty to display,
 For it was Coronation Day.
 The air was clear, the skies were bright,
 The dewdrops sparkled in the light,
 The flow'rs, in endless beauty spread
 O'er hill and vale, their fragrance shed,
 The birds sang sweetly from the trees
 And filled with song each rising breeze :

All nature seemed to find a voice,
And with humanity rejoice
And praise her God as ne'er before,
For France had found her king once more.
The streets of Rheims were thronged with men
Who came to see their king again,
And ev'ry window, ev'ry tower,
And ev'ry spire at daybreak's hour,
The flag of France in glory waved
In honor of their country saved.
The ringing bells from lofty spires,
The cannon's roar, the great bonfires,
The songs and the exultant cries
Extended to the very skies.
A long procession joyous, wild,
Conducted by the Maid, the child,
Approached the grand cathedral door
And entered slowly to restore
The crown, the sword, the robe, the rod,
To him their king, but not their God.
The Maid beside the altar kneeled,
Her lips not prayerless, though sealed.
Her standard in one hand she grasped,
Her cross the other tightly clasped.
The gorgeous sun with rays of white,
Transformed by painted window light
Into a spectrum not its own
Upon the Maid and altar shone.

This transformation made her seem
 More like an angel in a dream,
 Where things unite and reunite
 And make us think that wrong is right ;
 Where Nature's laws absurdly act,
 Where fancy seems as true as fact ;
 There was a solemn, tomb-like air,
 Which hushed the lips in silent prayer ;
 And here, before both God and men,
 The crownless king was king again.
 And just as he received the crown,
 The mighty mass of men knelt down
 In adoration of the Maid
 Who crowned her king, as she had said.
 Then spoke she in her sweetest tone :
 " O, gentle king, God's will is done,
 And dear old France loud praise will sing,
 Because thou art again her king.

O God, who rul'st supreme, alone,
 One voice to Thee we raise :
 For all the goodness Thou hast shown,
 Accept our feeble praise.

O, France ! let every vale rejoice !
 Let ev'ry hill proclaim !
 Let ev'ry creature find a voice
 And praise Jehovah's name."

Then from this vast and happy throng
Arose a sweet, responsive song :

“ O Thou ! before whom nations bow
In supplicating prayer :
Behold our nation rescued now
By one so young and fair !

Dear Maid, let angels now descend
To take thy sword and lance,
Thy coronation to attend
As Savior of Dear France.”

II.

WHILE passing through life's mortal flight
Some die while fame is at its height
And leave the world their trophies won,
To tell what more they might have done :
While others seem to live too long,
They reach their climax full and strong,
Then live just long enough to see
Their splendor fade, their glory flee,
And all their friends who used to raise
Unbounded gratitude and praise
For all their victories achieved
And all the benefits received,
Now say, as others they address :
" They have outlived their usefulness."
Now, had the Maid at Rheims expired,
When fame's bright zenith she 'd acquired,
France would have mourned full thirty days,
And draped each town with sad displays.
Men would have sung her praises o'er
Until their prating tongues were sore.
But no ; her wonderful career
Was not predestined to end here ;

Her great adversity enrols
Her name among the greater souls.
Now when the king at Rheims was crowned
The people stood in awe profound,
Convinced indeed that God had made
Him king of France by special aid.
Beneath the bright unclouded sky
Of torrid, scorching-hot July,
The king and army marched from Rheims
Along one of the lesser streams,
To capture Paris by that power
Which had sustained the Maid each hour.
The maiden urged the king to make
At once a grand attack, to take
Proud Paris from the haughty hands
That closed her gates 'gainst his commands.
The king, however, much preferred
That the attack should be deferred
Until he could negotiate
For peace, however high the rate.
Thus many days were thrown away
In nothing but this vain display ;
But when, at length, the king declared
That he for battle was prepared,
The maiden's face expression bore
Such as had not been seen before.
Her Voices warned her to remain
And from encounter to refrain.

She therefore asked to be excused
From battle ; this the king refused.
He bade her to resume her course ;
If not, she would be urged by force.
She could not but observe a change
In her career ; it seemed now strange.
She felt that her great work was o'er,
That she was called to fight no more.
The future seemed to sadly say :
“ O, maiden ! you have had your day.”
With trench, and wall, and guarded gates,
Proud Paris in suspense awaits
The hour, when from her streets shall rise
The songs of triumph to the skies.
According to the king's command,
The Maid and army took their stand
On rising ground in full array
Before the gate St. Honoré.
Complete arrangements being made,
A loud, terrific cannonade
Commenced on either side, and raged
Intensely as for life engaged.
Joan commanded the assault,
And did it, too, without a fault ;
Intenser and intenser grew
The conflict as they nearer drew.
The Maid, and leaders of the French,
At once leaped o'er the foremost trench,

And started for the second, where
A storm of bullets filled the air.
At this the leaders shook with fear,
For death, appalling death was near.
They faltered and with hurried breath
They cried : " O, Maid ! invite not death."
" Fear not ! " she said ; " for God can save,
Though we are hurled into the grave.
Come on ! and let your country know
That you fear not death's feeble blow ! "
Then on they rushed, no time to waste,
And reached the trench in breathless haste.
" Fill up the trench, O men, with mud
And cross it, though you cross in blood ! "
The trench was filled ; then Joan waved
That standard which dear France had saved.
And shouted in her loudest tone :
" Surrender, Paris, to God's Throne !
For He who rules both earth and sky " —
She said no more, but shrieked ; her thigh
Was pierced, and from the wound there gushed
A crimson stream which unimpeded rushed.
She fainted, fell among the dead,
And seemed like one whose life had fled.
Now, when the king knew this defeat,
His order came : " Retreat ! retreat ! "
The maiden heard this with despair ;
Her fingers clutched her bloody hair.

“O God!” she murmured, “is this right?”
Then fainted, gasped, — oh! dreadful sight.
Night fell upon the city, plain,
The ground was covered with the slain.
And, as she lay in great distress,
Despairing from her ill success,
Her soldiers cursed her, head and foot,
And shameful questions to her put.
She sobbed and wept, she rolled and moaned,
She shrieked in agony and groaned,
She raised to Heaven her tearful eyes,
Then most imploringly she cries:
“O God! forgive! forgive! I pray!
Thou knowest all. Oh! fatal day!”
This was a bitter, awful draught,
Which to its very dregs she quaffed.
She soon began herself to doubt,
Her faith went staggering about,
She seemed to read her awful doom
Inscribed in blood upon her tomb.
“No more to battle will I go,”
She said; “no more to fight the foe.”
And quietly her sword she hung
In the cathedral where it swung
In peace; because she was afraid
Some great mistake she might have made.
Entreaties from her king and men
Urged her to take up arms again.

She could but notice their appeal,
And with renewed, more fervent zeal
She said : " O king, I bow to thee ;
For thy command is law to me.
God has enthroned thee, God has raised
France from her downfall, God be praised !
I see before me clouds of woe,
Yet, king, most noble king, I go.
May God forbid that I, this day,
My king, His servant, disobey ! "
Great was the triumph England gained,
Great was the loss the French sustained,
When Paris from her walls unfurled
The flag of England to the world.
That this sad loss might be concealed,
The French their dead bore from the field
And in one mass, with fires so bright,
They burned them in the dead of night
And when the smoke had cleared away,
And night was transformed into day,
The ashes borne up by the gale,
Were spread abroad to tell the tale.
This great ill-fated enterprise
The French seemed to demoralize.
Success elates, puffs up, cajoles,
But adverse fortune tries men's souls.
And now succeeding a delay,
Existing only for a day,

Hostilities afresh resumed,
The French and English both consumed,
She therefore took up arms once more :
But not as she bore arms before.
One night alone the Maid withdrew
To seek, once more, an interview
With those whose nature God conceals,
With those before whom mortal kneels.
Her soul was full of sadness now,
She saw, or seemed to see, somehow,
The Future filled with bloody lakes,
With prison bars and burning stakes.
No ray of light now met her eyes,
No hope, no help, before her lies.
But hush ! Her Voices now return ;
She gives an ear that she may learn.
They speak to her, — they seem so strange ;
Again ! she starts. O, what a change !
It used to be her great delight
To talk with them by day or night.
They were the happy angels then
Whose mission was to cheer up men.
But now, like spirits from the grave
Whose flesh and blood the worms still crave,
There seemed to be a horrid throng,
Which to the tomb alone belong,
That stood before her anxious gaze
To talk with her, to curse or praise ;

And soon they broke the solemn pause
By moving their unsightly jaws.
She heard a low, sepulchral tone
That chilled her to the very bone.
They spoke ; she shuddered, then remained
Speechless, motionless, as if chained.
“ Within three months,” said one, “ a cell
Of stone and steel shall hold thee well ! ”
“ Within six more,” a second cried,
“ Thou shalt be by the judges tried.”
“ Within a year,” the third then spake,
“ Thou shalt be tortured at the stake.”
She shrieked aloud : “ Oh ! God above !
Hast Thou withdrawn Thy tender love ? ”
But hold, a light breaks on her woe.
She hears a voice she used to know,
“ God will be with thee, Maid,” it said ;
“ Fear not ! A crown awaits thy head ! ”
At this her sorrow turned to bliss,
She seemed to leave that dark abyss,
She gazed into the sky above,
She saw descend, a pure, white dove,
She leaped for joy. “ Sweet angel come
And take me to your happy home ! ”
The dove drew nigh on noiseless wings.
She listens. Hark ! The creature sings :
“ Sweet girl, arise ! Take up thy lance,
Thou hast not yet done all for France.

Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true,
And God will keep and comfort you."
Then stretching out her arms once more,
She said : " O, let me with thee soar !
Let me this cruel world forget !"
The answer came : " Not yet ! Not yet !"
And then the dove returning flies
Back to its home within the skies :
And as it takes its silent flight
It sings with vanishing delight :
" Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true,
And God will keep and comfort you."
The vision left the maid so weak
That she could hardly move or speak.
She sighed, she cried, and tried in vain
To keep awake her dozing brain.
But no, sweet sleep his visit pays,
And strews with flow'rs the thorny ways.
When she awoke, night had withdrawn
Her darkest curtain, bringing dawn.
The twinkling stars had closed their eyes,
And one by one retired to rise
No more till day's great king had pressed
His steeds into the golden West.
The Maid arose and looked around
As if she feared the very ground.
" Sad night," she said ; " is this a dream ?
And are things to be what they seem ?

O, would that I might fall asleep
To wake where men no more shall weep !”
Then kneeling, bowed with grief and care,
She sought relief by way of prayer.

“ O Thou ! whose ways we cannot know,
How poor and weak is man,
He sees life’s trouble, sorrow, woe,
Yet seldom sees Thy plan.

“ All that remains of life to me
Seems desolate and drear.
How could I live, then, without Thee
My lonely life to cheer?

“ Whatever things Thou hast in store
For me, it matters not.
I will extol Thee and adore,
Though Hell should be my lot.

“ And now, Dear Father, as I go
To take up arms again,
Preserve me, keep me from the foe,
From prison cells. Amen.”

Alas ! when once misfortune guides,
All hope of better prospects hides ;
And as one takes the downward road,
The lightest feather seems a load ;

And all he meets, both small and great,
Add something to increase the weight,
Until he cannot move, or bear
The load increased by one small hair ;
'Then laugh to see him groan with pain,
Advise him not to groan, complain,
Console by telling his defects,
His sins, his weaknesses, neglects,
By telling what he should have done,
What laurels some one else has won.
Perchance he asks a helping hand,
He gets a sharp, cold reprimand,
And finally, abject Despair
Finds him a wretch that does not care.
His cool, sarcastic friends then say :
" It is his fault ; he had his way."
Such seemed to be the maiden's lot,
When Duty called her to the spot
Where armies met in bold array
To find out who should win the day.
How often men their duty see,
And nothing more. Why should this be ?
Joan, without her wonted zeal,
Went forth to fight without appeal.
For Compiègne she then set out
And conquered all upon the route.
This city, strongly fortified
By massive walls and trenches wide,

She sought with forces to supply
Against the Duke of Burgundy.
The ringing notes, so loud and clear,
Of proud, eccentric chancicleer
Had bade the silent, starry night
Away to take its noiseless flight,
Had just announced a dawning day
In balmy, fragrant, blushing May,
Had broke the slumbers of the birds,
Had woke the sleepy, dozing herds,
Had filled the atmosphere around
With one continued, joyous sound,—
When Joan marched within the gate
Of Compiègne, there to await
Burgundian and English foe,
Who came the city to o'erthrow.
She went at once to church to take
Communion, and confession make.
The blush of youth upon her cheek
Had faded now, and pale and weak,
A pillar of the nave she sought,
And leaned against it, lost in thought.
Grieved by the sadness of her face,
Both men and children thronged the place,
Attracted to her by that love
Which draws the heart of man above.
“Alas ! good friends, and children dear,”
She said, “ why do you thus draw near ?

My heart tells me that I am sold
To England—God forbid ! Behold
By traitors I shall be betrayed,
My death I can not then evade.
O, pray for me with all your heart,
For king and France and I must part !
O Treason ! Treason ! born of Hell !
Alas ! I know thee but too well !
O God ! behold thy servant here
With death, tormenting death, to cheer !
Wilt Thou desert me, Holy One ?
But no ; 'Thy will, not mine, be done !"
The service closed, Joan retired
To do as he, her king, desired.
The sun had scarcely raised his head
Above his rosy-tinted bed,
When from the king the order came :
Advance to conquer in my name !
Leave Compiègne, the river cross,
And face the foe whate'er the loss !
She left the city with her men,
And barely crossed the river, when
Upon the enemy she fell
And fought courageously and well.
She never had displayed before
Her fortitude and valor more ;
Three times she forced them to retreat,
Three times acknowledge a defeat.

From morn till noon, till close of day,
She held the enemy at bay ;
But just before the sun went down
On this day's well-deserved renown,
Burgundian and English host
Unite e'en to their uttermost,
Resolved to capture live or dead,
The Maid before whom armies fled ;
For they considered her alone,
The soul of France in terror shown,
The living cause of their defeats,
The pow'r that conquers whom it meets.
Unequal contest : on one side
The English forces stretching wide
Advanced, their weapons glist'ning bright
Beneath the sunset's gorgeous light :
Opposed — most faithful to their post —
A mere handful of men at most —
The maiden's army stood prepared
To fight as long as life was spared.
Both armies halted face to face,
Each man, each weapon was in place.
Both stood as if to be reviewed.
A moment's stillness then ensued
Like that small fraction of an hour
Which comes before a thunder-shower.
The sun seemed to restrain his car
To watch this bloody scene of war.

From this deep stillness then awoke
The cannon's roar, with stifling smoke,
The weapon's clash, the death alarms,
The captains' cries : "To arms ! To arms !"
The maiden's voice was clearly heard
As at the head her horse she spurred ;
"Come on ! Be faithful to the end !
Your country's honor, men, defend !"
Now ev'ry muscle, nerve, was strained.
Death had no terror, Valor reigned.
They fought, most fearlessly, the foe.
No signs of weakness did they show.
At last, surrounded, Joan knew,
There was no hope. A sigh she drew.
She told her men that they must yield
And fly if possible, the field.
They sought the Oise, irresolute,
The enemy in close pursuit.
Their weary, sore, unwilling feet
Reluctantly sought this retreat.
They reached the river Oise at last,
Across its bridge they safely passed,
And refuge found within the gate
Of Compiègne inviolate.
Alas ! Joan too long delayed,
Her better judgment disobeyed :
For at the point of sword and lance
She still remained to fight for France

And with her standard in her hand
Kept back the foe as by command.
The bridge the last man safely crossed,
She turned about. No time was lost.
She spurred her horse at awful rate,
She reached the bridge — too late ! too late !
It rose and left the Maid alone —
A prisoner to England's throne.
An archer seized her with great force
And dragged her roughly from her horse.
She rose defiantly and said,
With glitt'ring sword above her head :
“ My blood the thirsty ground shall drain,
Before I yield to England's chain ! ”
At this the archer not alarmed
Most quietly the Maid disarmed.
And then in chains he bound her fast—
Joan the Maid was slave at last.
The Bastard of Vendôme obtained
The Maid and held her firmly chained.
No victory could be so great
To England as the maiden's fate,
To accident or treason due,
To which of them she thought she knew.
The chief of Compiègne, by name
De Fleury, made her blush with shame.
For surely his command — alas !
The drawbridge raised when she would pass.

The English troops are wild with joy,
Burgundians loud songs employ,
While ev'ry cannon's dreadful roar
And ev'ry banner red with gore,
Te Deums in cathedrals sung,
Hats thrown in air by old and young,
And loud huzzas and ringing bells
And great bonfires with shouts and yells
Announce the capture of the Maid
By Heaven sent her king to aid.
Like cattle or like merchandise,
Who owned her gave the highest price.
Unmindful of the great disgrace
They dragged her caged from place to place.
Like some wild beast from forest den
They showed her to the eyes of men.
Most shameful deeds, disgraceful acts
Are sometimes found in sternest facts.
To Beaurevoir, with eager pride,
A castle strongly fortified,
The Maid triumphantly they bore
And threw her weeping on the floor.
Gold buys not only what life needs
But conscience, reputation, creeds.
For six months she was bought and sold
Like some commodity — for gold.
To Rouen, then, 'mid scoffs and jeers,
Her trial to await in tears,

She was removed ; and here began
The history one dreads to scan.
The tinted, falling, pretty leaves,
The ripened grain in golden sheaves,
The juicy fruits upon the trees,
The homeward flight of birds and bees,
The lovely, fading, withered flowers,
The sad, yet pleasant, dreamy hours
The frozen, sparkling, morning dew,
The curling smoke from chimney-flue,
The forest's mournful, murm'ring sound,
The hills in silence most profound,
The Summer's valedict'ry strain
Still ling'ring on the lonely plain, —
Announced that Autumn days had come
But oh ! those days how burdensome
To her whose agony of soul
Poured forth from that dark dungeon-hole.
What beast however fierce and wild
Was treated like this simple child !
To satisfy desire or rage
They threw her in an iron cage.
In length it was by their design
So short that she could not recline.
In height, also by their command
It was so low she could not stand.
The third dimension could be seen
Would just admit the Maid between

The massive bars to which great chains
Were fastened to increase the pains.
Around her neck one chain was wound,
Her wrists and ankles others bound,
And then the cage and Maid were thrown
Into a cell and left alone.

How dark it was ! E'en darkest night,
Compared with this dark cell, was light.
To add to its most dreadful gloom,
Foul odors, like those from the tomb,
Arose and filled the chilly air
With poison for the Maid to share.

No sounds, save those from prison bell,
Broke the dead silence of the cell.

Joan, in this dark, dismal den,
Wept o'er the treachery of men.

Distressed by intense sorrow, she
Poured forth her bitter agony :

" 'Tis not the pain that makes me cry,
I would endure it all,— yes, die,—
My country and my king to free
From their accurséd slavery.

But oh ! how weak, how false, profane
Is man when seeking sordid gain."

She tried to clasp her hands in prayer,
But no ; those cruel chains were there.

Although her body was confined,
No chains nor bars could check her mind.

And thus in sweetest earnestness
Her lips her thoughts tried to express :
“ Dear Father, help me at this hour,
On earth, there is no saving power,
Man has condemned me for my deeds,
Not one — appears — who — intercedes.
Wilt Thou — my soul — in mercy — keep? —
For — give — them — all.” She falls asleep.
But lo ! Life’s curtain is withdrawn,
She sees the bright, celestial dawn,
The Gates of Paradise unclosed,
She looks within, there are no woes,
No fears, no chains, no deaths, no pains,
But happiness supremest reigns.
She saw a city made of gold
With streets of pearl. Yes, more ; behold
Ascending steps of crystal glass
Support the angels as they pass
From Earth to Heaven and convey
Departed Spirits on their way.
But hark ! She hears ecstatic strains,
Seraphic music entertains ;
It seems to come so very near,
She looks ; the choruses appear.
Three Saints attired in silver light
Conducted, clad in garments bright,
Ten thousand angels from the skies
Before her sleepy, dreamy eyes.

And as the bright and happy throng
Before her lightly pass along
A tiny, pretty, fragrant flower
Plucked by the angels from its bower,
Each dropped and whispered : " God is love,"
Then took its happy flight above ;
And as its white receding wings
So lightly bear it home it sings :
" Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true
And God will keep and comfort you."
The Saints remained till all had fled,
Then lifting up her weary head
They broke asunder all her chains,
Destroyed the cage and eased her pains,
And smote the dungeon-wall of stone
And took away her flesh and bone ;
Then bade her swiftly to arise
And mount with them the distant skies.
She seemed to tread the very air.
Space had foundations ev'rywhere.
She bade the world a sweet good-night,
She passed the twinkling stars in flight,
She passed the sun and worlds unknown,
She almost reached the Golden Throne,—
When lo ! her chains the silence broke,
She started, screamed. She had awoke.
It was a dream. Alas — a dream
Which made her lot more dreadful seem.

When grief and woe the mind distress
How sweet is sleep's unconsciousness !
But when from sleep the mind awakes
Grief doubles, woe no limit takes !
From bliss the Maid awoke to see
Herself in abject misery.
The vision was before her eyes
But oh ! how dreadful were her cries !
" O God ! " she said, " why must I know
This dungeon-cell, this hell below ?
Why was I born ? O fatal day
That gave life to this lump of clay !
O Death ! Thou hast no sting for me !
O Grave ! Thou hast no victory !
My mother bowed in bitter tears,
That mother who in tender years,
Taught me to kneel, taught me to pray :
' Our Father.' Oh ! what will she say !
When Rumor tells her that her child —
Her dearest one — is so defiled.
And home — that dearest place on earth,
That place where love first had its birth,
That place where father, mother meet
Each day around the mercy seat
That place where brother, sister plead
For that forgiveness which all need,
That place which all your faults conceals,
That place which all your sorrow heals,

That place which God gave man in love,
Sweet emblem of the Home above, —
No more shall I behold that place,
No more shall feel its sweet embrace.
Alas, my grief no tongue can tell.
God bless my home ! Dear home, farewell ! ”
The jailor then unlocked the door
Of this dark cell, and on the floor
He placed a pan of water, foul,
And said in tones most like a growl :
“ There ’s water ! Drink, as quick as flash !
And stop that noise or get the lash ! ”
“ I do not like, sir, to complain ;
But will you loose my ankle chain ?
It hurts me so I can not keep
From crying, though I be asleep.”
“ Enough ! I ’ll hear no more,” he said ;
“ The curse of France is on your head.
Complain again and you shall feel
The cutting lash from head to heel.”
He slammed the door and turned the key,
Her lips still asking to be free.
And left alone like singing bird
Imprisoned, there was faintly heard
A sweet, a touching, plaintive song
Which echo scarcely could prolong :
She seemed to see her mother’s face
And thus she sang in her embrace :

“O Mother ! I must bid farewell,
The end is drawing near :
O, kiss me mother dear, and tell
My father not to fear.

The Future seems so dark to me,
So full of pain and woe ;
Draw nearer, Mother ; let me see
Your face before you go.

I saw the angels come last night
And stand around my bed :
I thought they took me in their flight,
Yet here I am instead ;

Sweet angels spread your snowy wings
And come once more to me :
Unbind these cruel iron rings
And bear me homeward — free.

Farewell ! dear Mother, Father, Friends !
Farewell to all I love :
Each day my earnest prayer ascends
That we may meet above.”

The English of success were sure
Because they held the Maid secure,
And they considered her alone,
The power that shook all England's throne ;

But power if only Deified
Can act though not personified ;
And so that power which hurled the lance
At England, in behalf of France,
Still reigned and conquered as before,
Though its possessor fetters wore.
Strong Compiègne, with forces vast,
Surrendered to the French at last.
And city, village, hamlet, town,
In quick succession to the crown
Of France surrendered full, complete,
And England cursed her sad defeat.
The English hatred now became
So strong for Joan, that her name
When mentioned made them rave and swear
That greater torture she should bear.
Hate cried for vengeance, vengeance cried :
" By blood will I be satisfied."
Three months the Maid in prison lay,
Tormented more and more each day,
When from the king of England's hand
A letter came with this command :
Joan the Maid, by my decree,
By Bishop of Beauvais shall be
Examined, tried, that he may draw
A plea of guilt by God and law.
What could have been more base, absurd,
Than that her trial should be heard

By one whose very heart and soul
Was under England's full control.
The king and bishop then decide
That she be in the prison tried,
Where she might not by any chance
Escape their constant vigilance.
They were resolved her life to take,
Yet really had no charge to make ;
So spies to ev'ry town were sent
To find some charges, or invent
Some plot which would convict the Maid,
Though truth and justice they evade.
The spies returned and with them brought
These charges, which they had not sought :
" Truth, virtue, love for ev'ry one,
Sweet faith in God and Christ His Son."
The Bishop heard the spies' report.
" Ye traitors of the meanest sort !
Ye cowards ! villains ! ye deserve
To die the death of her ye serve !"
Thus he addressed them, thus displayed
His feelings for Joan the Maid.
An hundred judges, learned, wise,
Her grand tribunal did comprise.
They could examine, blame, denounce,
But sentence they could not pronounce.
Their presence seemed to be required
For that display which was desired.

They hoped to thrill the Maid with fear
By telling her she should appear
Before these judges who so well
Her inmost thoughts could surely tell.
The Bishop of Beauvais had power
To sentence her when came the hour.
The time of trial was at hand
As stated by the king's command.
Outside the cell the prison hall
Was bounded by a huge stone wall.
The roof above shut out the light
And made it dark as any night,
Along these walls fierce soldiers stood
Like beasts of prey which thirst for blood.
An hundred benches set in rows,
Where tired nature could repose,
At one end of the hall were placed
And each a judge most learned graced ;
While in their midst upon a chair
The Bishop sat with priestly air.
Before his chair a slab of stone
Served as a desk on which were thrown
His books and papers, pen and ink, —
Those things which help great men to think.
Before this desk, with rapid pen
The scribes were placed, their number ten.
The English rabble fierce and wild
Came in to persecute the child.

The dimly burning tapers' light
Shone like the fireflies in the night ;
Which only made this solemn scene
More like that where lost souls convene.
The hour arrives. The prison bell
Tolls mournfully a parting knell
As if some soul had met its doom
Beyond the veil of mortal gloom.
The judges, Bishop, rabble, all
Remain in silence in the hall.
The massive iron doors, which hung
Upon their creaking hinges, swung
Wide open. Ev'ry eye was strained
To see the beast led forward chained.
Her chains which rattled on the floor,
As step by step she neared the door,
Delighted this most eager throng
More than some sweet, enchanting song.
Joan appeared, her face was white,
Her eyes unnaturally bright,
Her lips were blue, her cheeks were thin,
Her bones seemed bursting through the skin ;
Back from her forehead full and fair
Her bony fingers kept her hair.
Her head was bowed, her body bent,
Her strength, her life, were nearly spent.
Her steps were weak, her breath was short,
And thus they dragged her into court.

Her trembling steps approached, at length,
The pris'ner's stand, and here her strength
Seemed scarcely able to sustain
Her heavy, dragging, cruel chain,
And here, before the Bishop's chair,
She kneeled in humble, silent prayer.
At this the rabble loudly cheered
And yelled, and hooted, scoffed, and sneered,
And cried : " Ye witch, 't is time to pray,
We have a debt now we will pay :
May curses be your daily bread,
And fires torment you, live or dead ! "
Joan arose her charge to wait,
She had no counsel, advocate.
" Be silent all ! " the Bishop said,
And then he thus addressed the Maid :
" Joan, you are accused of crime
Against the Holy Faith sublime ;
Also, as we regret to see,
Of Sacrilege and Heresy.
Young Maid, what is your age ? " he cried.
" About nineteen, sir, " she replied.
" What can you say of these base crimes,
Unequaled in these Christian times ? "
" My mother, sir, taught me to say
The Pater Noster ev'ry day,
The Ave also and the Creed,
According to my daily need.

No one, except my mother dear,
Taught me my God to worship here."
"Repeat aloud the Creed and prayers,"
He said, "before these learned chairs."
"O sir! I cannot read a word,
I only know them as I heard
Them from my mother's lips as she
Taught me to pray so earnestly.
I am afraid that some mistake
In its hard language I might make,
And by this ignorant display
Something against my God might say.
If, as confessor, you will hear
My prayers and Creed, sir, give an ear,
Most willingly will I recite
Them as I say them ev'ry night."
"Back to the dungeon, jailor, lead
This Maid who knows not prayers nor Creed."
And bending underneath the weight
Of iron chains, of curse and hate,
Within her cage and cell once more
He led her back and locked the door.
The rabble shouted: "Witch!" and howled.
The judges shook their heads and scowled.
The Bishop's eyes were on the floor,
His face a sad expression bore.
The jailor threw a crust of bread
Beneath the door; but nothing said.

Alone once more her breaking heart
Cried bitterly : " O Thou ! who art
The Infinite, Eternal One —
My God ! My God ! What have I done !
That this most dreadful weight of woe
Should crush the soul that loves Thee so !
Have I been false ? Is my past life
One record of a sinful strife ?
Have I, by sin, offended Thee ?
For this hast Thou deserted me ?
Have I been serving Satan's will ?
And am I serving Satan still ?
Shall I, at last, my Voices find
To be from my deluded mind ?
O God ! Forbid that I should be
Deceived by such base treachery !
Forgive me, Father, still I pray.
Increase my faith from day to day.
O give me courage to appear
Before my judges without fear !
And grant me wisdom, power of thought
To answer questions as I ought !
In mercy guide me to the end !
My dying moments, God, defend !
Sustain me in that dreadful hour
When flames my trembling flesh devour :
And when the awful scene is o'er
And men can torture me no more,

Then, Father, may my soul arise
Triumphant to the purer skies ! ”
But hark ! Again that voice is heard
Repeating sweetly word for word :
“ Be faithful, fervent, earnest, true,
And God will keep and comfort you.”
The next day’s sun had scarce unfurled
His banner o’er a wintry world,
And called from slumbers sweet and sad
Unconscious mortals good and bad,
When hastily the eager crowd
With gestures wild and voices loud,
Assembled in the hall to see
The next act in this tragedy.
The Bishop, judges, scribes assumed
Their duties, and the case resumed.
The Bishop spoke, and all were dumb :
“ Bring forth the Maid, the hour is come.”
Joan appeared, and sweetly smiled,
For she was fully reconciled.
“ Joan ! ” he said, “ upon your oath,
Before your God and country both
You are commanded to reveal
The truth and nothing to conceal.”
“ Most noble lord,” she said, and bowed
As well as by her chains allowed,
“ Think well of what you dare to claim
When you charge me in His great name

To tell the truth concerning things
Which appertain to God and kings.
You say you are my judge — not so ;
You are instead my greatest foe !
Sir ! in the name of God I stand,
I care not for man's weak command, —
He can accuse, he can convict,
Most dreadful pain he can inflict,
And he my wretched life can take
By rack or axe or burning stake ;
But all the powers of earth combined
Which ever mortal dared to find
Can not destroy ; yea — harm my soul,
Thank God ! He can not that control !
Sir, you can ask me what you will
My motto has been truth ; is still.
Two things from me no man can draw,
By any threat, by any law :
The secrets of my God above
And of my king whose throne I love.”
The rabble yelled : “ Give her the rack !
A hundred stripes upon the back ! ”
The judges from their seats arose
And calmed their fury to repose.
The Bishop simply said : “ Beware !
Defy not ; though you think you dare.”
He then went on : “ Do you still hear
Your Voices as the saints appear ? ”

"I do," she said ; "they came last night,
And when they came all seemed so bright."
"And did they tell you not to fear
That they would save though death were near?"
"To that I will not, sir, reply.
If you would know, ask Him on high."
"Well, are you in a state of Grace?"
The Bishop asked with solemn face.
"If not," she said, "O God, I pray!
Receive me into Grace this day!
But if I am it is my prayer
That Thou wilt keep me safely there."
"Who are these saints whom you have seen
So often round your bed convene?"
"The name St. Margaret one bore,
Saint Catherine another wore.
Saint Michael was the third and last —
God grant my lot with them is cast!"
"What did these blessed saints reveal
Before whom you were wont to kneel?"
"I tell you plainly, sir, again;
What spirits know is hid from men.
Their message did the king concern
And what it was you can not learn!"
"Well, were these saints, by you revered,
In nakedness when they appeared?"
"Think you that God who clothes the flow'rs
In beauty far beyond man's powers,

Who clothes the fields, the trees with care,
Who clothes the songsters of the air,
Who clothes the brute with glossy coats,
Who clothes the fish that sinks or floats,
Who clothes the serpent's winding form,
Who clothes the low, despised worm,
Who clothes the insects as they need,
Who clothes man gorgeously indeed, —
Think you that poverty has made
My God so poor that He needs aid
To clothe the Saints as He desires
Regardless of what man requires?"

The Bishop struck the desk a blow —
"No speeches, Maid; say yes or no!
What evidences did you bring
That would convince your crownless king
That your great mission was Divine?
Did he not ask you for a sign?"

"Ask of the sun that lights the sky,
Ask of the moon the sun's ally,
Ask of the stars that tell no tales,
Ask of the breezes or the gales,
Ask of the fleecy clouds that sail
According as the winds prevail,
Ask of the birds when they appear,
Ask of God, if you do not fear,
Ask of the winds from off the sea.
Ask of them all, sir, — not of me.

For as I told you twice before,
I will not say ; ask me no more."
Cries of " Burn her ! " came from the hall.
The Bishop cried : " Be silent all ! "
" Did not your Voices, Maid, predict
Escape from death though we convict ? "
" That question, sir, has nought to do
With anything that concerns you.
But there is One and only One
Who knows the end. His will be done ! "
" Were you not asked to lay aside
Your warlike dress, your martial pride,
And to assume the modest dress
Of graceful woman weaponless ? "
" I was, sir, almost ev'ry day :
But not by Him whom I obey."
" What can you say of all your dead ?
Of all the blood which you have shed ?
Of all the pain, of all the woe
Which you have caused with each death-blow ? "
" Sir, in the name of Him I fear,
Before whom I may soon appear,
I do most solemnly declare,
That my bright swords no blood stains bear.
I led the army to save France " —
" Kill her ! kill her ! and with her lance ! "
The rabble shouted. " Let her feel
The cutting pain of pointed steel ! "

"Silence ! I say ;" the Bishop cried,
" And let the Maid be justified."
" Amid the battle's awful roar,
Its victims drenched with their own gore,
Why looked you, Maid, upon your ring
As though it were some magic thing?"
" My ring the name of Jesus bears,
That name which lightens all my cares.
Around it, sir, there are entwined
The sweetest memories of mind ;
My mother gave it me and said :
' Take this, and after I am dead,
Think of your mother, whose last breath
Taught you of Jesus and of death.'
It takes me back to childhood's days,
It brings up all my childish plays,
It shows my father's fond embrace
As I looked up into his face
And asked him who God was, and why
He let my little playmate die.
It shows me childhood's happiness,
It shows me home's sweet blessedness,
O sir ! that ring is more to me
Than all the wealth of land and sea."
" Why did you leave your home to fight
For one who rules, but not by right?"
The Bishop sternly asked of her.
" Because I was commanded, sir."

“ And did you not, Maid, disobey
Your parents, when you ran away
From home and friends, to undertake
The yoke of England’s king to break ? ”
“ I did, sir, as I fully know ;
For God commanded me to go.”
She was remanded to her cell
To reappear at morning’s bell.
The next day, promptly on the hour,
The bell from its dark, prison tower,
With deep, reverberating sound
That filled the hills and vales around,
In solemn measures called once more
The rabble to the court-room door.
The Bishop, judges, came to fill
Their places and then all was still.
Joan appeared with smiling face,
And bowing, kneeling, took her place.
The Bishop, with his priestly air,
Addressed the Maid with nicest care :
“ Will you allow the Holy Church
Your deeds and actions, Maid, to search ? ”
(She knew the Church was also sold
To England for its price in gold),
And lifting up her youthful head :
“ God is my Judge ! ” was all she said.
“ Do you refuse, then, to permit
The Church to do as it sees fit ? ”

"God is my Judge!" she said no more;
 Her face determination bore.
 "And do you not, then, understand
 That our great Church has full command?"
 "God is my Judge! I do His will!"
 She said no more, her lips were still.
 "Do you ignore your judges, then?"
 "God is my Judge!" she said again.
 "But by the gods! do you not know
 That we can order your death-blow?"
 "God is my Judge!" No more, no less.
 She seemed in perfect peacefulness.
 "Ah! shall I put you to the rack?
 Command the lash upon your back?
 Shall I commit you to the stake,
 And let you there confession make?"
 "God is my Judge!" she seemed as glad
 And undisturbed as he was mad.
 The rabble gave an awful yell:
 "Send her into the fires of Hell!
 With red-hot steel burn out her eyes!
 Cut out the curséd tongue that lies!"
 "God is my Judge! God will defend,
 Though you torment me to the end!"
 The judges knew not what to say,
 But rising, calmed the fierce display.
 The Bishop, when he had assumed
 His dignity, the case resumed.

"Will you submit," he said, with hope,

"To him our Holy Father, Pope?"

"Conduct me to the Pope, and I
Myself to him will justify.

What God, sir, has revealed to me,

Nor pope, nor bishop, nor decree,

Nor powers of earth can now compel

My trembling lips and tongue to tell."

"Maid, he who dares to break his vow

And spurn the Church, as you do now,

Is called a heretic direct,

The burning stake he must expect."

"Although I should behold the flame

With fiery tongues around my frame,

I would not now reveal one word,

Sir, more or less than you have heard."

"Would you allow to interfere

The Gen'ral Council, were that here?"

"What is that council, sir?" she cried.

A monk — Isambard — then replied :

"It is a council, Maid, composed

Of men allied, of men opposed.

They hear the case and then decide

According as the laws provide."

The Bishop rose, his hands he wrung,

"By God !" he said, "monk, hold your tongue !"

The Maid looked earnestly at both,

And blushed to hear the Bishop's oath.

Then said : " You shall not hear one word,
Sir, more or less than you have heard."
" Then will we put you to the rack
Till all your bones and sinews crack."
" Sir, tear me limb from limb," she said .
" Tear my frail body from my head !
Give me the lash ! give me the flame !
Give me the pain Hell would not claim !
Burn out my eyes with red-hot steel !
Cut out my tongue ! my blood congeal !
Tear out my beating heart, and see
It quiver in its agony !
I swear before my God above !
Whom I adore, I worship, love,
Before you who my life has cursed,
To say no more, sir ; do your worst !"
The hall was filled with great uproar.
The rabble yelled, and cursed, and swore,
They gnashed their teeth, they clutched their hands,
" Choke the false witch !" were their demands.
The judges threw their arms about
With unbecoming, angry shout,
They shook their heads, and left their seats,
And rushed out madly to the streets.
The soldiers thrust their swords at her
And cried : " Accurséd murderer !
Chain her fast to the nearest stone
And let the crows pick ev'ry bone ! "

The Bishop's voice was heard o'er all,
Commanding silence in the hall :
" Into her dungeon, jailor, throw
This most degraded child of woe.
Let Famine feed her, darkness cheer,
And inch by inch let Death appear ! "
The jailor seized her by the wrist,
And giving it the prison twist,
" Come on ! " he said. She screamed with pain.
And lifting up her heavy chain,
" O sir ! please do not hurt me so ! "
She said, " I will, sir, I will go."
As step by step she walked along,
The rabble burst forth with a song :

 " Joan ! Joan !
 The pride of France,
 Where is your sword ?
 Where is your lance ?
 Why don't you pray ?
 Why don't you sing ?
 Why don't you praise
 Your bastard king !
 Why don't you call
 Your voices down
 To help you fight
 Old England's crown !
 What will we do ?
 What will we do ?

To entertain
And tickle you?
Burn out your eyes !
Cut off your ears !
Cut out your tongue !
With knife or shears !
Peel off your skin
And let the crows
Pick off your flesh
With beaks and toes !
And hang your bones
Upon a tree
For all to see,
For all to see ;
We all agree,
To hang your bones
Upon a tree
For all to see."

Thus ended this disgraceful act
In that dark tragedy of fact.
Her testimony, word for word,
Had been recorded, and referred
To that assembly called by name
The Inquisition, to its shame ;
For this assembly had been sold
To England, and was thus controlled.
This false tribunal, when it learned
The facts, this verdict soon returned :

“Ye Bishop, Judges, hear ! O hear
Our verdicts as they do appear !
Joan is found, we much lament,
To be the Devil’s Instrument !
Undutiful in high degree
To her devoted family !
And thirsting for the blood, the life,
Of those most faithful in the strife !”
The lawyers whom they deigned to call
Declared her innocent of all.
Joan was dragged, sick, from her cell
That public torture might compel
Her strong, resisting soul to make
Confession at the burning stake.
Two scaffolds in a churchyard built,
Served as the place to test her guilt.
Behind the church this graveyard lay,
A picture of slow, sad decay :
The graves and mossy slabs were old,
The quaint inscriptions scarcely told
The birth and death of those whose bones
Lay crumbling underneath the stones.
The head-stones stood in many ways
And bore the marks of ancient days.
Some hewn from granite stood upright,
And some of softer make, though white,
Stood leaning, as if half inclined
To fall upon the graves behind ;

And some were broken ; others lay
Full length upon the lifeless clay ;
And in their midst was one old tomb,
Where darkness, dampness, silence, gloom,
Supremely reigned and seemed to say :
“ Disturb me not till Judgment Day.”
A few old trees, with branches bare,
Stood sighing in the solemn air,
And moss and vine in silent strife
Upon their lifeless trunks found life.
With stones and bones the ground was strewn,
The flowers had gone, the birds had flown :
The soil was cold, the grass was dead,
All life, save moss and vine, had fled.
The scaffolds were prepared with care,
In honor of the grand affair.
The Cardinal, the Bishop, Priest,
As if invited to a feast,
And judges, doctors, all allied,
The larger scaffold occupied.
The other, built of stone and wood,
Near by and facing this one stood.
The church bell from its lonely tower
Tolled solemnly the passing hour ;
The sun was veiled by passing cloud
And o'er the churchyard threw a shroud ;
A solemn, mournful wind arose,
As if the dead could not repose ;

And then the sound of tramping feet
Came from the long and narrow street ;
The churchyard gate swung open wide,
An officer appeared as guide.
Great multitudes of men appeared,
And as they saw the scaffolds cheered.
The old, the young, the blind, the lame,
With sticks and clubs as weapons, came,
The air was full of shout and song,
Which came from this disgraceful throng ;
They beat the gravestones with their sticks,
And danced and yelled like lunatics.
Then, suddenly, the shouts increased :
“ Here comes the Witch ! Prepare the feast ! ”
They swung their clubs, they clawed the air,
They beat their breasts, and tore their hair :
“ Accurséd Witch ! begin your prayer,
Call down your Voices from the air,
We 'll tear your very heartstrings out !
Down on your knees and be devout !
Ho ! Brothers, sing :
O Maid ! O Maid !
What will we do
To entertain
And tickle you ?
Burn out your eyes !
Cut off your ears !
Cut out your tongue

With knife or shears !
Peel off your skin
And let the crows
Pick off your flesh
With beaks and toes !
And hang your bones
Upon a tree
For all to see !
For all to see !
We all agree
To hang your bones
Upon a tree
For all to see ! ”

Joan appeared with shrunken face,
With glassy eyes, with easy grace,
With quiv'ring lips, with puny hands
Together bound by iron bands,
With massive chains around her waist,
With fetters on her ankles placed.
They bore her to the scaffold which
Was thus inscribed : **JOAN THE WITCH.**
They chained her firmly to the stake,
And left her there her peace to make.
She stood alone, she shook with fears,
Her head was bowed, her eyes in tears,
Her glossy, long, disheveled hair
Waved beautifully in the air ;

She sighed, she sobbed, she groaned, she wept,
And utter silence then she kept.
And thus she stood ; but nothing said,
Until at last she raised her head :
“ Have mercy, God ! ” she said no more,
Her agony in silence bore.
The Bishop, at this dreadful sight,
Sat motionless ; his face was white,
He trembled, shook and tried to speak,
His voice was broken, trembling, weak.
The executioner appears,
The Bishop melted into tears.
The rabble solemn silence kept,
And some who came to kill her wept.
And as she stood in silence there,
So innocent, so pure and fair,
So like an angel from the skies,
They turned away their weeping eyes.
Hate changed to pity. Pity cried :
“ Oh ! let the Maid be justified ! ”
There are times when the basest mind
Feels sorrow keenly and is kind.
A Preacher then tried to persuade
Joan to yield and death evade ;
And thinking to compel her now
Her king and France to disavow,
In words which seemed for her defence
He spoke with solemn eloquence :

“ Alas ! ’thou noble House of France ! ”
He said, and cast a with’ring glance,
“ How hast thou fallen so from grace
As to acknowledge one so base ?
Why hast thou promised to obey
A king, a heretic, this day ?
Yes, Joan, ’t is to thee I swear
Charles is a heretic — beware ! ”
Joan, though shamefully abused,
Spoke not till he her king accused ;
Then, interrupting him, replied
With voice defiant, dignified :
“ Although in flames, sir, I am cast,
Sir, though this moment be my last,
Sir, though my God the veil withdraws,
Sir, though I hear Hell’s gnashing jaws,
I swear, here, as I only can,
That my king is a Christian man ;
The church he loves, with it complies,
Who calls him Heretic, sir, lies ! ”
“ O, stop her mouth ! ” the Bishop cried ;
“ Let not her tongue be gratified ! ”
A recantation then he read
In which he offered her instead
Of death, imprisonment for life.
The Bishop’s conscience was at strife.
He urged her quickly to comply
With this, nor gave the reason why.

And many by remorse attacked
Entreated her to sign the act,
Which only asked her to confess
Her ignorance — no more — no less.
She stood a moment lost in thought,
Then said : “ I will ; let it be brought ! ”
The notary gave her a pen
To sign the act that saved her, when
She blushed, she smiled, she hung her head ;
“ I can not read or write,” she said.
With his assistance then she traced
A circle, and within it placed
A cross, which signified her name,
And rescued her from rack or flame.
Her pen had scarcely left the page—
The mob burst forth with awful rage.
Revenge had kindled such a fire
That nothing but her fun’ral pyre
Could satisfy the mad demands
Which they now threatened with their hands.
Around the Bishop’s stand the crowd
With swinging clubs, and curses loud,
Assembled to demand the life
Of her by rack, or stake, or knife.
And thus the mob with fiery eyes,
Its awful anger gratifies.
Some hurl upon the stand their sticks ;
Some hurl their clubs, some knives, some bricks ;

Some hurl the broken, old gravestones,
Some hurl the dead men's whitened bones.
They cried : " Ye miserable priests !
Ye coward judges ! villains ! beasts !
This day your king ye have betrayed !
This day thus shall ye be repaid ! "
The Bishop to escape the blows
Excited, frightened, quickly rose
And said : " O men ! allay your thirst !
Her sentence soon shall be reversed ! "
Controlled by no enacted laws
Their anger now turned to applause.
They cheered the Bishop, danced, and sang,
The very air with praises rang.
The Maid stood weeping at the stake.
She raised her eyes and thus she spake :
" Have mercy, Father ! It is done.
Forsake me not through Christ Thy Son ! "
Back to her cell they bore her then
Amid the scoffs and sneers of men ;
There to await the final day
When God would take her soul away.
The Bishop saw that she must die
His party's hate to satisfy ;
And so the burning stake he chose
The awful tragedy to close.
The smiling month of May had come.
The air was filled with busy hum

Of bees, that sought the sweetest flow'rs
That grew in Nature's lovely bow'rs.
The birds returned — a happy throng —
To cheer the hills and vales with song.
The sweet Spring showers, the bright warm sun,
Their work of mystery had done.
The grass was green, the skies were blue,
The air was clear, the clouds were few.
The playful lambs skipped o'er the hills
And sought the cooling, shady rills.
The sleepy cows, at close of day,
Lay down and watched their young ones play.
The gently breathing Summer's breeze
Played softly in the leafy trees.
The sunlight, and the sparkling dew,
Each morn the buds and flow'rs renew ;
While evening lulled them all to sleep
And set the stars a watch to keep.
All Nature had received new birth.
The resurrection type of Earth.
The year's bright morn was almost passed :
For Spring was breathing now her last.
A few hours more and all would be
Recorded in her history.
Her hot successor's sultry breath
Poured in to hasten on her death.
O Spring ! thy fairest, sweetest hours
Must go and leave behind the flow'rs.

But hold ! Another morn must go —
A morn of life, a morn of woe.
Wait, gentle Spring ! In kindness wait !
For Death will furnish thee a mate, —
That mate, as sweet as thou art mild,
Is Joan of Arc, the Maid, the child.
Spring looked around, her beauty saw
And sighed at Nature's cruel law.
It was the eve before her death
That Joan sat, with sobbing breath,
Within her dungeon-cell so dark
Communing with her God ; and hark !
A robin perched upon a tree
Was pouring forth sad melody.
And through the massive walls of stone
She could just hear the robin's moan.
As if some one had robbed her nest
The bird its saddest notes expressed.
Joan sat with attentive ear
And tried its plaintive song to hear.
“ Sweet bird,” she said, “ for thee I feel.
Would that thy sorrow I could heal !
God made thee to be gay and free
Why dost thou show such misery ?
Has some one robbed thee of a home
And left thee in strange fields to roam ?
Thy young has some one from thee torn
And left thee all alone to mourn ?

Art thou without a mate to sing
The early morning-song of Spring?
Alas ! dear creature, be not sad !
For thou art good ! Thou canst be bad !
Nor sin can thy sweet soul compel
To love high Heav'n, or fear dark Hell.
I'd give the world if I could be
As free from sin as thou art free !
Sweet bird, to-morrow when you sing,
Your sweet companions with you bring !
And sing your brightest, sweetest lay
And drive my sorrow all away.
Come, pretty birds, and sing to me
To-morrow evening from the tree !
But no ! To-morrow I must die.
Sweet bird, good-bye ! A sweet good-bye !
Sweet music I shall hear no more
Until upon that brighter shore
I stand, and hear the angels sing :
Praise God the Father ! God the King !"
The robin ceased and took its flight.
"Sweet bird," she said, "good-night ! good-night !"
There was a pause, a silent spell
And then she said her last Farewell :
"My Country and my Country's king !
Let Angels of your praises sing !
Ye rocks and streams of France — Farewell !
Ye sunny hills and vales — Farewell !

Ye sun and moon ! Ye stars of night !
Ye fleecy clouds ! Ye skies so bright !
Ye happy flocks ! Ye grazing herds !
Ye pretty flow'rs ! Ye singing birds !
Ye pastures green ! Ye waters sweet !
Ye shady woods where sylvans meet !
Ye grottoes, lakes, and secret dell !
I loved you all ! alas ! Farewell !
O King ! whose noble Christian name
Adorns a brighter page than Fame,
For thee I fought ! For thee I die !
O King ! most noble King, good-bye !
Ye sons of France ! Ye daughters fair !
Ye churches calling men to prayer !
Ye brave, ye loyal, valiant men !
We part and shall not meet again !
God grant that bloody war may cease !
God grant you everlasting peace !
God bless you ! Keep you ! With you dwell !
Belovéd France and King — Farewell !”
Then sobbing, sleep o'erheard her cries
And for the last time closed her eyes.
The day of execution came —
That day of horror, day of shame.
The solemn, doleful prison bell
In earnest tolled a parting knell.
Joan attired in woman's dress
Left the dark cell with cheerfulness.

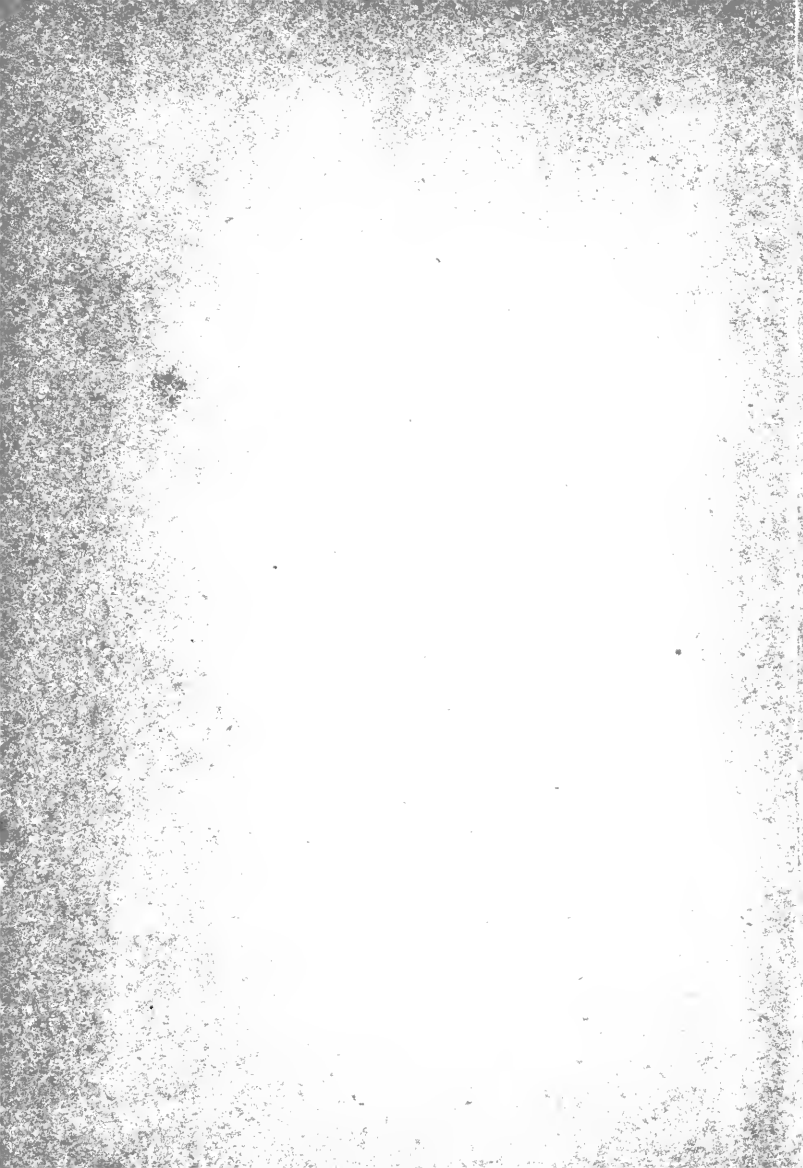
They placed her on the fatal cart
Prepared to feel death's cruel dart,
Beside her, her confessor rode
To do the duty which he owed.
The monk Isambard, tender, kind,
With measured footsteps walked behind.
No one was there whom she preferred,
No one to speak a loving word,
No one to drive away the tear,
No one to say : "Be of good cheer."
No one her final hour to bless,
No one to kiss her or caress,
No one to draw a parting sigh
No one to say a sweet good-bye.
At last she reached the journey's end
She saw the stake that was to send
Her pure, her innocent, sweet soul
Beyond the reach of man's control.
The Bishop, judges, mob she saw
Assembled to defy all law.
She was about to leave the cart —
The preacher said : "In peace depart !
The church can do no more — good-bye !"
She was alone, alone to die.
She knelt : she clasped her hands, and there
Poured forth her final earthly prayer :
"Into thy hands, O God, I come,
So sinful, weak, so burdensome."

Receive me, Father, if thou wilt
And wash away my sin and guilt !
O, grant me Thy preserving pow'r,
Protect me at this awful hour !
And when my eyelids close in death,
And when I draw my dying breath,
And when my beating heart shall cease,
O, grant me everlasting peace !
Dear Father ! those by whom I die,
Forgive them all ! all sanctify !
And as Death takes them one by one,
Oh ! may they hear from Thee : 'Well done !'
My country, Father, still defend !
And to its king such wisdom send
That Peace, Prosperity, and Love
May reign till all are saved above.
Farewell to all ! I say again,
Farewell, forevermore. Amen !"
She then arose and took her place
Upon the scaffold, death to face.
They chained her to the stake and fled.
"Can I not have a cross?" she said ;
No one this last request would heed :
But hissed her. Oh ! accurséd deed !
At last one Christian act was done.
A man, of dry twigs, made her one ;
"O, thank you kindly, sir," she said,
As tears of gratitude she shed.

She kissed the cross, she raised her head :
"I am prepared to die !" she said.
The spark was struck, the crackling flame
Up from the fagots fiercely came.
Upon the multitude she gazed,
Her hands to Heaven then she raised :
"O Rouen ! 'T is my dying breath,
Thou shalt atone for this — my death !"
The Bishop hearing her drew near
His face as white as death with fear.
"Bishop," she said, "through you I die.
God bless you, sir ! Good-bye ! good-bye."
For one short moment all was still,
And tears the rabble's eyes would fill.
But hush ! a cry of deep despair !
The flames have caught her dress and hair,
"Water ! water !" her instinct cried.
"Mother ! Mother !" no voice replied.
Her head fell forward on her breast,
"Jesus !" she sighed and was at rest.
A moment passed and all was o'er,
Joan of Arc was now no more.
They threw her ashes in the Seine,
That trace of her might not remain.
Into that world of endless bliss
Beyond death's dreadful, dark abyss,
Beyond the torture and despair
Of mortal persecution, there

To meet the blessed saints of Him
The Prince of Seraphs, Cherubim,
To enter that abode of peace
Where sorrow, woe, forever cease,
And with the choruses to sing :
"Praise God the Father, God the King !"
The noblest soul of France had fled
In splendid triumph o'er the dead.
Deep on her stone should be engraved :
"For France she died, but France she saved."







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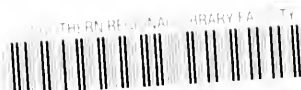
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